



CONGRESSMAN CURT WELDON

7th District Pennsylvania



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CONTACT: Maureen Cragin
Ryan Vaart
(202) 225-2539

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**OPENING STATEMENT OF REP. CURT WELDON
CHAIRMAN, MILITARY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HEARING ON THE NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAM AND THE QDR**

May 15, 1997

This morning, the Military Research and Development Subcommittee and the Military Procurement Subcommittee meet jointly in open session to receive testimony on the Quadrennial Defense Review assessment of DOD's national missile defense program. I welcome my colleague and good friends Duncan Hunter, chairman of the Procurement Subcommittee and ranking member Ike Skelton, and all my friends from the Procurement Subcommittee.

We are also honored to have Mr. Floyd Spence, Chairman of the full committee, with us today, and our good friend and ranking member, Mr. Ron Dellums.

We welcome also today's witnesses, Dr. Paul Kaminski, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, and Lt. Gen. Les Lyles, US Air Force, Director of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization.

Dr. Kaminski, this is possibly your last official function as Under Secretary, and I want to express to you personally my thanks for your service to the nation and the cooperation you have extended to our committee. While we haven't always agreed on all the issues or priorities, your professionalism and competence have been models for your successor to emulate. We wish you well in your future endeavors, but—that doesn't mean we'll let you off the hook today.

Two months ago, Dr. Kaminski, you testified before the R&D Subcommittee that the Administration's BMD programs were "affordable and executable." The FY 98 budget request, in fact reduced funding for every single theater missile defense system under development, and reduced the national missile defense program by 40 percent from last year's appropriated level. Many of us on this committee were skeptical that these programs were executable with the funding provided in the Administration request.

Let me explain briefly why we have been skeptical with respect to national missile defense.

In the 1994 Ballistic Missile Defense Organization annual report to Congress, BMDO noted that the national missile defense program had been recast as a technology readiness program, rather than an acquisition program, as it was structured in the Bush Administration. BMDO predicated this technology readiness program on a required funding

level of \$600 million a year. That would mature the technology to the point that an initial NMD capability could be deployed by fiscal year 2002. Other levels of funding were considered, but let me read what BMDO reported to us if funding should fall to an annual level of \$450 million:

“This funding level could seriously damage our NMD readiness strategy and would likely permit projected third world threats to the homeland to materialize prior to any viable NMD deployment capability. At this low investment rate, the overall NMD development cost significantly increases as does the time required to develop and deploy the capability needed to overcome ballistic missile threats...”

There will be very limited effort on system integration and technology insertion, and almost no effort in deployment readiness planning. These efforts are critical in addressing key systems issues such as element integration, and they are essential to being able to reduce deployment lead times.”

In 1994, that’s what BMDO reported could happen if NMD funding were reduced to \$450 million annually.

Yet in 1995, the very next year, the BMDO report to Congress stated that the technology readiness program would take about \$400 million a year. The Administration request for NMD submitted in early 1995 was even lower, \$371 million, far below the \$450 million funding BMDO said was inadequate the year before.

A little later in 1995, BMDO also informed our committee that a viable “three plus three” NMD program, involving a three years technology development phase followed by a three year deployment phase, would require \$800 to \$850 million a year for development.

Yet, in 1996, the very next year, when OSD announced that the NMD program was being restructured as a three plus three deployment readiness program, the Department proposed funding for the “new and improved three plus three program” at about \$400 million a year, only half the BMDO estimate.

So the committee was faced with the following situation. OSD had come to us with a deployment readiness program, which it proposed to fund at a level even lower than the level that BMDO just two years before had described as undermining its technology readiness program. This was a level that “*would likely permit projected third world threats to the homeland to materialize prior to any viable NMD deployment capability*” and would provide “*very limited effort system integration and technology insertion, and almost no effort in deployment readiness planning.*”

So I can’t tell you that I am surprised by the QDR determination that the NMD program has been underfunded. Nor am I particularly surprised that the QDR determined that the program was underfunded by \$2 billion over the future year defense plan, the figure reported by press accounts of the QDR briefing. That corresponds well to a program underfunded by about \$400 million a year. Two months ago, when appearing before our committee, our witnesses described the NMD effort as “very high risk.” Perhaps they are not surprised by this assessment either.

After recounting these figures, I can’t help but come away convinced that the NMD shortfall is related more or less directly to the Clinton Administration’s unwillingness to commit to deploying a national missile defense capability. President Clinton vetoed our fiscal year 1996 defense authorization bill over this issue. He opposes a commitment to deploy national missile defenses. He believes that the ABM Treaty is a cornerstone of strategic stability and that national missile defenses potentially undermine that stability. Honest people may disagree about the wisdom of a commitment to deploy a capability to defend Americans from accidental or unauthorized launches of ballistic missiles, or an attack from a rogue nation. But the President did make a commitment. He made a commitment to a program that would at least allow us to deploy by 2003 if we decide to do so.

Up to now, it would seem he is falling short on this commitment, even as we on the committee get almost daily revelations about how the important missile defense program really is. Some of the most recent areas of concern include:

- The CIA report that describes the degradation of Russian nuclear command and control.
- Russian nuclear forces going on alert, within minutes of launch, because of a Norwegian rocket carrying a science payload.

- An intelligence community report that Russian missiles can be retargeted on the United States within a few minutes, if not seconds.

- Another CIA report describing a multi-billion dollar Russian program constructing underground shelters at the same time that Russian military forces are going unpaid due to shortages of funds.

- A new study that details proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction around the world, and predicts that both India and North Korea will “almost certainly” have ballistic missiles of intercontinental range by 2010.

- The deployment of No Dong missiles in North Korea.

All this has appeared publicly in the very recent past. The NMD program represents our only potential capability to protect the U.S. in the face of these emerging threats and uncertainties and we must get moving for good and obvious reason. However, funding and a lack of commitment to deploy NMD capability have been the key sticking points between Congress and the Administration.

We have several other important issues to address today as well. I am looking forward to hearing the details of the QDR assessment of the NMD program. Clearly the QDR developed a very different view of the required elements of the three plus three NMD program and its funding requirements than the NMD program proposed in the President’s budget request just three months ago. The committee needs to understand the basis for this radical change.

I know that I am also very interested, and I believe many of my colleagues are also, in finding out why the Administration believed its proposed NMD budgets were realistic. The Administration must have a reasonable technical and budgetary rationale of the factors that led to its radical reassessment of the funding requirements for NMD. I would also be interested in any insights into the budget process that led to this difficulty.

A third set of issues pertains to how the Administration intends to correct the NMD funding deficiency. The press reported that the shortfall for fiscal year 1998 alone is nearly \$500 million, and that Secretary Cohen has opted to fully fund the NMD program. Does the Department have a plan to do this? Will the Department make recommendations to the committee on how to realign its fiscal year 1998 budget request? Will it propose a reprogramming to cover the shortfall? Will it add money to the defense budget? Will it add nearly \$500 million to the BMD program as a whole, or does this shortfall imply a huge restructuring within its \$2.6 billion BMD request?

Mr. Secretary, General Lyles, again, welcome, and thank you for joining us.